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OCI No. 1580/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
8 July 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Situation in Burma's Shan State
A majority of

1. ~~one~~ ^{one} million Shan, close ethnic kin of the Thai and Lao. ~~About half~~ the Shan live in the Shan State proper, a federation of seventeen smaller states in north-eastern Burma. The Shan want independence from Burma and have historically opposed political dominance by Burmans from the Irrawaddy valley.

2. Remaining Burma's most unassimilated minority--the Shan remember they once reigned over lower Burma--Shan tribesmen have been in chronic rebellion against the Rangoon government since Burma gained its independence in 1948. Burmese "military occupation" of the Shan State has probably done more to inspire than to retard dissidence. Armed resistance, however, is sporadic and the estimated strength of the "Shan State Independence Army" is only some 3,000 with its leaders divided among themselves.

3. One of the lesser hill tribes in the Shan area is the Lahu. Numerically they are relatively insignificant, but they do have ethnic and commercial ties with other tribesmen in the Yunnan province area of Communist China. While the Shan are not believed to have significant aid or political relations with China, some Lahus are allegedly indoctrinated by the Chinese, particularly along the Yunnan border. However, there is no solid evidence that would point toward a major Chinese effort to subvert the tribes and the Lahus presently pose no serious threat to Burma or Thailand.

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